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C E N T R A L I N T E L L I G E N C E A G E N C Y

6 May 1953

SUBJECT: NIE-96: THAILAND'S ABILITY TO WITHSTAND COMMUNIST
PRESSURES OR ATTACKS
(Draft for Board Consideration)

PROBLEM

To estimate the political, military, and economic strength of Thailand, with particular reference to Thailand's ability to withstand external and internal Communist pressures or attacks

QUESTIONS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

I. THAILAND'S POLITICAL, MILITARY, AND ECONOMIC STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

How do the following factors affect Thailand's ability to withstand external and internal Communist pressures or attacks:

A. Political factors

1. What is the extent and nature of public support of the Thai national government? Of the provincial and local governments?

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2. What is the effectiveness of governmental administration at the national, provincial, and local levels?
3. What problems of political stability, internal order, and military effectiveness exist as a result of the struggle for power within the Thai government?
4. What is the strength, disposition, and effectiveness of dissident political and para-military groups within Thailand?
 - a. Viet Minh groups and sympathizers among the Vietnamese population of Thailand?
 - b. Viet Minh groups and sympathizers among other ethnic groups?
 - c. Communists and Communist sympathizers among Thailand's Chinese population?
 - d. Dissident Thai groups?
 - (1) Thai Communists and Communist sympathizers?
 - (2) Pridi and his adherents, and their ties, if any, to Communist-inspired activities in Communist China and Southeast Asia?
 - (3) Other dissident Thai political groups?
5. What is the effectiveness of governmental control of dissident elements and activities at the national, provincial, and local levels?

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6. What attitudes, of importance to Thailand's ability to withstand external and internal Communist pressures or attacks, exist among the Thai government and public with respect to:

- a. Thailand's international orientation?
- b. The war in Indochina?
- c. The war in Korea?
- d. Communist China, and in particular the recently-established "Thai Autonomous Area" in southern Asia?
- e. Events elsewhere in Southeast Asia?

17. What trends in the above strengths, weaknesses, and attitudes may be expected in the foreseeable future?

B. Military factors

1. What is the current strength, disposition, and combat effectiveness of Thailand's:

- a. Army?
- b. Navy?
- c. Air Force?
- d. Police forces?

2. What problems of political reliability, if any, exist among Thailand's military and police forces?

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3. What problems of logistic support exist?
4. What trends in the above strengths and weaknesses may be expected in the foreseeable future?

C. Economic factors

1. What are the principal economic strengths and weaknesses of Thailand which would affect its ability to withstand external and internal Communist pressures or attacks?
2. What trends may be expected in these strengths and weaknesses in the foreseeable future?

II. THAILAND'S CAPABILITIES TO WITHSTAND COMMUNIST PRESSURES OR ATTACKS

A. Communist pressures

1. What capabilities would Thailand have, under present circumstances, to withstand such external Communist pressures as:
 - a. Trade inducements, and other "peace offensive" tactics?
 - b. Demands that Thailand pursue a more neutralist foreign policy? Withdraw from the Korean war? Withdraw its recognition of the Associated States of Indochina? Withdraw its recognition of Nationalist China?
 - c. Demands for boundary "rectification?"
 - d. Demands that Thailand alter its government to suit Communist desires?

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2. What capabilities would Thailand have, under present circumstances, to withstand such internal Communist pressures as:
 - a. Communist-inspired subversion, strikes, and sabotage?
 - b. The creation of a Communist-inspired, and perhaps Pridi-headed, "Free Thai Government," either in Communist China, Indochina, or Thailand?

B. Communist attacks

1. What capability would Thailand have to counter an invasion of Thailand in the immediate future by Indochinese Communist units?
2. An invasion by Indochinese units at any time following the end of the 1953 rainy season, and after Indochinese Communist units had consolidated recent gains made within Indochina?
3. An invasion by major Chinese Communist units, supported or not supported by Indochinese and Burmese Communist units, at any time?
4. What capabilities would Thailand have to counter Communist-inspired armed insurrection within Thailand, at any time in the foreseeable future?

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C. Contingencies affecting Thai capabilities

In what manner would the above Thai capabilities to withstand external and internal Communist pressures and attacks be affected by:

1. Events in Indochina?

- a. A major gain in Communist strength, and the consolidation of Communist strength on Thailand's northern and eastern borders?
- b. A major decline in Communist strength, and the removal of Communist strength from Thailand's borders?
- c. A continuation of indecisive warfare in Indochina, with little or no consolidation of Communist strength on Thailand's borders?

2. Western assistance to Thailand?

- a. A major increase in Western aid, including guarantees of Thailand's security?
- b. A major decrease in Western aid and commitments?
- c. Continuation of the present level and nature of Western aid and commitments?

3. Events in Korea?

- a. An armistice?
- b. A major intensification or expansion of the Korean war?
- c. A continuation of indecisive warfare in Korea?

4. Possible events elsewhere in Southeast Asia?

5. Others?

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